

## California and Western Medicine

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evident, it must be acknowledged to be a somewhat surprising circumstance, that the number of American and foreign periodicals in medicine and its closely allied sciences, which must be utilized in compiling the "Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus," should exceed the number of eighteen hundred; and that the total number of subject titles which must be yearly catalogued and cross-indexed should exceed the appalling total of fifty thousand topics! With such a mass of yearly scientific material, it is no wonder that the conjoint efforts of the Surgeon-General's Library, the Carnegie Institute of Washington, and the American Medical Association should be necessary to produce that work, which enables American and other physicians to have access to an authoritative yearly index to current medical literature. It is indeed a fortunate arrangement that permits these three great agencies to produce this publication which is of such vital importance, to all research and other investigators in medicine who desire to consult collateral articles at their source, in their special fields of study and interest.

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CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE is one of these eighteen hundred periodicals just referred to. What reasons can it give for its existence?

With all due regard to the high standing of California physicians and their ability to do their proportionate part in maintaining and promoting the progress of scientific medicine, it would take a brave heart to insist that our state journal, from purely the scientific standpoint, was indispensable to the world.

As a matter of fact it does not and never has made any such pretension; and its owners, the members of the California Medical Association, at no time have ever had such a major aspiration for it. While it is true that CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE whole-heartedly subscribes to, and enthusiastically supports all medical literature produced by California physicians which measures up to the highest standards of literary and scientific excellence, and hopes that an increasing number of articles of such type will appear between its covers, it recognizes that the production and publication of such super-excellent papers by California physicians is something over and above and beyond itself. While CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE gladly lends its encouragement to all who produce or seek to produce such theses, at the same time it must carry on with such studies and papers as are actually brought forth by the members of the C. M. A. Of their work, it feels that the members of the California Medical Association need not make undue apology. Whatever that work may be, and to what greater or lesser height of standards the papers through which the studies are presented, could or should measure, it may be assumed that, inasmuch as these contributions are largely the discourses which are presented at the annual and other meetings of the California Medical Association and the component county societies, that

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## EDITORIALS

### THE REASON WHY OF A STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

From the days about the year 1450, when Gutenberg and Mentz revealed to the western world the allurements to be found in reproducing words and thoughts through the use of letter blocks, the printing press has been of inestimable value in the dissemination of knowledge. Through printed word man acquires most of the facts which give him a basis for reflection and which serve him as a guide to conduct and action.

The printed textbooks used in the medical curriculum are a foundation basis for the physician's mental armamentarium. After his graduation from his medical school the physician continues to purchase medical books, and he nearly always also acquires the subscription habit to one or more medical journals.

It is upon these medical periodicals that the physician in part depends to keep himself informed of the advances of his science, as well as to keep him in touch and in fraternal and proper contact with fellows of his own guild. Medical journals exist then, because they are an especially effective means of bringing desired knowledge to busy practitioners, both on what individual members and the guild as a whole are doing.

While the need of the printed page in the dissemination of medical knowledge is therefore